



TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING

25 LAKESIDE AVENUE, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

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MEMORANDUM

TO: PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS

FROM: ZAYIBETH CARBALLO, P.E., P.L.S., P.P, CME, CFM
DIRECTOR/MUNICIPAL ENGINEER

DATE: JULY 21, 2025

**SUBJECT: ZB-25-06/ESSEX COUNTY/TURTLE BACK ZOO/
GIBBONS EXHIBIT
560 NORTHFIELD AVENUE
BLOCK 161, LOT 1**

We are in receipt of the following information pertaining to the above-referenced application:

- A. Plan entitled, "Aerial Map for Renovations of the Gibbons Exhibit at the Turtle Back Zoo, Block 161, Lot 1, Township of West Orange, New Jersey". The plan prepared by French & Parrello Associates (Michael J. Piga, LLA) is dated November 15, 2019;
- B. Plan entitled, "Conceptual Site Plan prepared for Gibbon Exhibit Renovations at the Turtle Back Zoo, West Orange Township, Essex County, New Jersey". The plan prepared by French & Parrello Associates is dated May 20, 2024;
- C. Correspondence prepared by French & Parrello Associates (Michael J. Piga, LLA), dated July 2, 2025; and



D. Township's Board Application and associated documents.

I. INTRODUCTION

The subject site is located along the Southerly side (eastbound side) of Northfield Avenue and located within the Township's Residential (R-1) Zone District and abuts South Mountain Reservation.

The Applicant is proposing to renovate the existing Gibbons Exhibit to provide new viewing features, new brick paver patio area, informational signage, and landscaping updates. The proposed improvements to the inside of the exhibit include; three-tiered platforms, open roof structures, and faux rope vines. In addition, the proposal includes renovations to the existing gibbons building. The building improvements include; an extension to the existing building, raising the existing roof over the proposed extension, new ceiling lights and shift gates.

II. VARIANCE

None. The applicant is appearing before the Planning Board pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-31a, which requires public agencies expending public funds to refer development proposals to the municipal planning board for its review and recommendation related to the municipal master plan.

III. SITE PLAN

The proposal is the rehabilitation and improvement of an existing disturbed area of the Zoo that will benefit patrons by providing improved viewing locations and amenities in and around the existing Gibbons Exhibit. The applicant also proposes an addition to the existing gibbon building. The proposed improvement results in an increase of 125 S.F. of impervious cover which is less than the 400 S.F. threshold for a Minor Development under Chapter 25, Section 29 of the Township of West Orange municipal code. The proposed improvements do not meet the definition of a Minor Development and are not subject to additional stormwater management measures, since the increase will be de-minimis.

ZC/jrm



